

The Sport of Kings and Peasants

Bocce Ball, pronounced “BAH-chee” is fast becoming the latest craze in Truckee. Since the inception of Truckee’s new league, through Truckee’s own Recreation and Park district, Bocce Ball courts are springing up around town. Laura Mello, landscape architect and senior partner of LJM Design Group in Truckee, knows why.

“Bocce Ball is one sport anybody can play. There is a certain amount of strategy involved but it’s the kind of sport you can play while socializing. It’s fun for all ages and all levels of fitness.”

Bocce ball originated in Egypt as early as 5000 B.C. and is known as the oldest sport. The Egyptians are said to have passed it on to the Greeks, who taught the Romans. Roman soldiers, while between battles, played with Coconuts in North Africa, and then fashioned balls from olive wood. Wherever they traveled they brought the sport with them.

The French, who call the game Petanque (pet-ANK), once said the sport was great therapy for curing rheumatism and rejuvenating the body. Historians say it was played by royalty—noblemen and peasants alike, including Queen Elizabeth I and Sir Francis Drake, who delayed his Armada in order to finish a game. Today, the Prince of Monaco provides the international cup.



Bocce Ball Court

Played with two players or a team of three to six players, the target ball, called a “pallino” is tossed. Then heavier balls are thrown. The ball closest to the “pallino” wins.

There are several websites that are very informative, such as www.bocce.org/rules which gives information on the number of throws and disqualification guidelines. To find out how to build your own bocce ball court go to www.bocce.com and you can order equipment and see details for construction. There’s a great court you can visit in Truckee at River View Park. San Francisco has some of the oldest and most charming courts, near Ghirardelli Square in Aquatic Park.

There is also www.xtremeBocce.org located on the West Shore of Lake Tahoe that has an official membership roster and you can contact the president for events.

“There are a variety of ways to build a Bocce Ball court”, says Janet Green, land-

scape architect and partner at LJM Design Group. “Officially, the court length is 87.6 feet but for recreational play, 10 feet by 60 feet is standard. The court can be made of local materials, such as tan colored decomposed granite instead of the standard granulated oyster shells, which can be too bright. Alternatively, shale or clay is sometimes requested, but any uniform, gravel surface can be used.

“The sides of the court can be framed with pressure-treated wood and trimmed with Trex or a similar recycled product, to hold up to our harsh Sierra environment. The surface of the court is laid on a base of Class II aggregate. You need about one inch of surface material (about two cubic yards), on top of six inches (12-15 cubic yards) of ¾” base rock. The walls around the court are typically five inches above the surface of the court. There is a “foul zone” at each end and we usually design some sort of patio seating at one end of the court for the cheering section.

“Sometimes the courts can be built in a place to make the most of a dramatic view or be nestled between trees for shade. Maintenance is fairly easy. Rake away airborne weed seeds that may germinate

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lul to other fish eaters such as humans, raccoons, bears or even *cats* for pity's sake, but it sure takes a toll on dogs!

Generally, clinical signs appear within six days of a dog eating an infected fish and include symptoms such as vomiting, lack of appetite and fever. Ninety percent of dogs showing symptoms die if they are not treated. Thankfully, Salmon Poisoning is treatable if it's caught in time. If

Donner Lake back then and he had to treat a case or two.

Other than that, most of these cases occur more in the Pacific Northwest.

Here are a couple of *other* maladies I want to warn you about:

Canine Flu

An increasing number of pet dogs have been diagnosed with canine influenza, a

and hangs around for 10 to 21 days even with antibiotics or cough suppressants. However dogs that get the more severe pneumonia syndrome may have a high grade fever and lots of panting. Mortality rate is actually pretty low, but if you suspect your canine buddy may have this increasingly common condition, see a vet right away.

Antifreeze

As winter approaches, our humans start thinking around winterizing their cars... and that often includes a change of antifreeze. What many don't know is that the stuff is pretty tasty to some unsuspecting pets. It's an alcohol-like compound that can be pretty attractive to cats and dogs. (Children too.) Despite the good taste, it is *extremely* toxic and can cause kidney failure that is often fatal in just a few days. If a cat walks through a puddle of antifreeze and then licks its paws, it can ingest enough of the stuff to cause death. About five tablespoons can kill a medium-sized dog. So keep those containers well sealed and clean up all spills!

All in all, it's not so bad being a dog in Truckee. There are no fleas or ticks here...they can't live at this elevation. Rattlesnakes drop off at about five thousand feet. I can't wait to get back to the dog wash and tell that rumor monger that his Salmon Poisoning scare is for the birds. Wait a minute...can dogs get bird flu? I'll have to fire up the doggy net and get back to you! 🐾

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and clean off wind-blown debris. That's really all there is to it", she adds.

Pete Kristian, Adult Sports Coordinator for the Truckee Donner Recreation and Park District says that they have league games twice a week. There are 11 teams with four to eight people on each team. When asked why the sport seems to be gaining such popularity he replied, "There are people who have never participated with the Recreation and Park Department before. It's really social, people barbeque and it's not super competitive."

Ed Larsen is the unofficial, local Bocce Ball expert. Ed was the person who suggested the Recreation and Park Department put the courts in and he says the department has been really great. He and his wife started their teams about a year ago by simply asking people to play. "Because it's a very

social game it was easy to get people to join. You can play with a glass of wine or a beer. The rules take five minutes to learn and you can start playing immediately." The Recreation and Park Department waters down and rolls the courts before each game. The league plays three games, and each game takes about 45 minutes. They start at 6 pm. and last until about 8:45.

Bocce Ball is by far one of the fastest growing sports in Truckee and it's easy to see why. Next time you are ready to challenge yourself with an ancient sport of noble origin, try it out and you just might find yourself in "Amore"!

Resources:

The Truckee Recreation and Park District is located at 10046 Church Street, in Truckee. Their phone number is (530) 582-7720.

LJM Design Group is located at 10775 Pioneer Trail in Truckee. Their phone number is (530) 587-6003. 🐾